

Mr. LAHOOD. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 5931, legislation prohibiting future ransom payments to Iran.

In the midst of a global war on terror, it should be common sense that the United States of America should not be sending untraceable pallets of cash on an airplane to the leading state sponsor of terrorism. Apparently it isn't, though, because that is exactly what happened and what this administration engaged in.

We know now that \$1.7 billion in cash was given to Iran in exchange for the release of prisoners, violating America's longstanding policy against ransom payments.

Predictably, this administration has admitted that it cannot guarantee that this money did not go to fund current or future terrorism by Iran. In addition, all of this was done in secret, lacking transparency with the American people.

Today the House is taking action to end this practice. H.R. 5931 prohibits any cash payments to Iran regardless of the rationale or reasoning behind it. It also ensures the American people will be notified if a President ever attempts this sort of deal again.

America cannot be a country that sends cash to countries that fund terrorism. Period.

RECOGNIZING LOWE'S HEROES IN SYKESVILLE, JEFFERSON COUNTY

(Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise in recognition of a group of men and women from the Fifth Congressional District of Pennsylvania who recently volunteered their time and talents to help improve their community.

Lowe's Heroes is a companywide volunteer program for Lowe's that gives employees a chance to volunteer for local community improvement projects. In return, Lowe's provides the material and manpower to make those projects happen.

Just last week, men and women from the DuBois Lowe's store volunteered to help build a centerpiece for a town square project in Sykesville, a community only a handful of miles away from the store's location.

This is a long-awaited project in the community to transform a vacant lot into a beautiful park for community events and a place for people from across the community to gather.

In addition to the contributions of the Lowe's Heroes, the store is also donating the decorative and structural blocks for the town square's centerpiece, along with lighting for the area.

These men and women represent the best of what small towns across the United States represent. I commend them for their selfless efforts.

□ 1230

PROVIDING FOR CONSIDERATION OF H.R. 5931, PROHIBITING FUTURE RANSOM PAYMENTS TO IRAN ACT, AND WAIVING A REQUIREMENT OF CLAUSE 6(A) OF RULE XIII WITH RESPECT TO CONSIDERATION OF CERTAIN RESOLUTIONS REPORTED FROM THE COMMITTEE ON RULES

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, by direction of the House Committee on Rules, I call up House Resolution 879 and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 879

Resolved, That at any time after adoption of this resolution the Speaker may, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 5931) to provide for the prohibition on cash payments to the Government of Iran, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. In lieu of the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Foreign Affairs now printed in the bill, it shall be in order to consider as an original bill for the purpose of amendment under the five-minute rule an amendment in the nature of a substitute consisting of the text of Rules Committee Print 114-64. That amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be considered as read. All points of order against that amendment in the nature of a substitute are waived. No amendment to that amendment in the nature of a substitute shall be in order except those printed in the report of the Committee on Rules accompanying this resolution. Each such amendment may be offered only in the order printed in the report, may be offered only by a Member designated in the report, shall be considered as read, shall be debatable for the time specified in the report equally divided and controlled by the proponent and an opponent, shall not be subject to amendment, and shall not be subject to a demand for division of the question in the House or in the Committee of the Whole. All points of order against such amendments are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. Any Member may demand a separate vote in the House on any amendment adopted in the Committee of the Whole to the bill or to the amendment in the nature of a substitute made in order as original text. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommit with or without instructions.

SEC. 2. The requirement of clause 6(a) of rule XIII for a two-thirds vote to consider a report from the Committee on Rules on the same day it is presented to the House is waived with respect to any resolution reported through the legislative day of September 27, 2016, relating to a measure making or continuing appropriations for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2017.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HULTGREN). The gentleman from Alabama is recognized for 1 hour.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, for the purpose of debate only, I yield the customary 30 minutes to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS), pending which I yield myself such time as I may consume. During consideration of this resolution, all time yielded is for the purpose of debate only.

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Alabama?

There was no objection.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, House Resolution 879 allows for the consideration of H.R. 5931, the Prohibiting Future Ransom Payments to Iran Act. The rule makes in order all five amendments submitted to the Rules Committee. The rule also provides authority for the House to expeditiously consider a continuing resolution.

On June 24, 2015, President Obama stood in the Roosevelt Room of the White House and said: "I am reaffirming that the United States Government will not make concessions, such as paying ransom, to terrorist groups holding American hostages."

This position shouldn't have been surprising. It has long been the position of the U.S. Government to not pay ransoms to terrorist organizations, for doing so only encourages further kidnappings and puts more American lives at risk.

Despite this reassurance from President Obama, on January 17, 2016, an unmarked cargo plane landed at a European airport. On this plane were wooden pallets stacked with unmarked foreign currency—\$400 million worth, to be exact.

Who was waiting at the airport to accept this money? The Islamic Republic of Iran.

On that exact same day, several Americans who had been held prisoner in Iran were released. That, Mr. Speaker, is a ransom payment.

Since then, we have learned that the full U.S. payment to Iran totaled \$1.7 billion. The money was related to a decades-old dispute about an Iranian arms sale. There are a lot of concerning issues at play here.

First, by giving money to Iran, the United States is supporting the world's leading state sponsor of terrorism. Iran uses their money and resources to support groups like Hezbollah, Hamas, and other radical terrorist groups in Iraq, Pakistan, and Afghanistan. Iran is no friend of the United States, and their efforts have resulted in the deaths of U.S. citizens and servicemembers. So why in the world is the United States sending them cash payments in the first place?

Second, the United States should never pay a ransom. I know they claim

that the \$1.7 billion payment was a “settlement,” but let’s get real here for a minute. The payment was made on the exact same day the Americans were released.

Let’s look in the dictionary for just a moment. “Ransom” is defined as “a sum of money or other payment demanded or paid for the release of a prisoner.” That is exactly what happened here.

Iran knows it was a ransom payment. An Iranian general was quoted as saying that, “the money was returned for the freedom of the U.S. spy, and it was not related to the nuclear negotiations.”

So Iran knows it was a ransom. The American people know it was a ransom. Well, how about the State Department? When pushed on this topic by the media, a State Department spokesman said that it wasn’t ransom but, rather, “leverage.” What is the difference? The American prisoners in Iran were not released until the cash payments occurred. You could try to hide the truth by calling it “leverage” or a “coincidence,” but the fact is this payment was a ransom.

Just ask the Obama Justice Department. Press reports indicate that Assistant Attorney General John Carlin raised the concern that the cash payment to Iran would send a signal to Iran and the world that the U.S. had changed its ransom policy. This isn’t some radical conspiracy theory we are talking about here. This is the exact same concern raised by the Justice Department under President Obama—the people he appointed.

Since this ransom payment occurred, Iran has detained several more foreign citizens, including Americans, French, British, and Canadians. Sadly, I expect our Iranian friends are already making their ransom demands.

The third major concern I have is that the payments were clearly done in a way to hide them from the American public. The payments were made in cash. According to an international body responsible for combating money laundering, known as the Financial Action Task Force, the “physical transportation of currency” is “one of the main methods used to move criminal assets, launder money, and finance terrorism.”

If this whole ordeal was public and on the up-and-up, then why did the U.S. make this payment in cash?

The Obama administration originally said that the payment had to be in cash because financial sanctions prevent us from engaging in wire transfers with Iranian banks. Well, it turns out that isn’t true. In fact, on at least two occasions, the U.S. has made wire transfers to the Iranian Government.

According to Politico, in July 2015, the U.S. sent Iran approximately \$848,000 to settle a claim over architectural drawings. The wire transfers didn’t stop there though. The U.S. wired Iran almost \$10 million in April of this year to pay for 32 metric tons of heavy water.

Here is another issue with the cash payments. Iran has a track record of money laundering, and making cash payments will result in it being even harder to track their illicit activity. Cash does not have an electronic signature, so the money could eventually become untraceable. This will make it almost impossible for law enforcement and intelligence agencies to track where the money is going. In other words, the cash could be transferred to a group like Hamas or Hezbollah and the United States may never know. This is deeply troubling.

So, Mr. Speaker, this legislation makes one thing crystal clear. The United States Government is not in the business of paying ransom. Specific to Iran, the legislation will prohibit future cash payments to Iran until the nation stops sponsoring terrorism and is no longer involved in money laundering.

To boost transparency and accountability, the legislation also requires 30-day congressional notification and review of any future settlements related to the U.S.-Iran Claims Tribunal. This way Congress will have an opportunity to review any future payments instead of them being secretly executed in the dark of night.

Ultimately, the United States cannot continue to give in to Iran. Whether it is their nuclear program or their kidnapping of U.S. citizens, we simply cannot keep making deals with Iran in which the Ayatollah benefits and the American people suffer.

We need to stop empowering Iran and, instead, start weakening them. We must stop giving in to Iran and start standing up to Iran. By putting our foot down, the American people and our allies in the Middle East will be safer and stronger.

Mr. Speaker, I urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 879, so we can move forward with consideration of this important bill.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

I thank the gentleman from Alabama (Mr. BYRNE) for yielding me the customary 30 minutes for debate.

I rise today in opposition to the rule.

Let’s not parse words. This bill is a Republican attempt to politicize the recent payment by the United States to the Government of Iran.

The legislation equates the payment, which was made as part of a settlement of a 35-year-old dispute before the United States-Iran Claims Tribunal, as ransom. It prohibits any future payments. And I might add, Iran has 200 claims before the tribunal at this time, and all of the American claims have been settled before the same Algiers Accords tribunal. It prohibits any future payments to the Iranian Government and requires the President to submit to Congress a report listing and evaluating outstanding claims before the tribunal.

Mr. Speaker, let’s get something straight. The payment to Iran was not

ransom, and anyone who suggests it was is just trying to score some political points in the limited time we have left in Washington. The payment was part of a legal settlement to a long-standing 35-year dispute. It was money owed to the Iranian Government by the American Government, and the transfer was simply our government meeting its obligations.

As I indicated earlier, it may surprise those watching at home to learn that the tribunal has awarded roughly \$2.5 billion to American citizens in the past.

I understand that there are many in Congress concerned by the loosening of sanctions on Iran. I am one of them. As one of the few Democrats to publicly oppose the Iran deal, I know that Iran is, without question, not our friend, a state sponsor of terrorism, and I don’t think you will find anyone in this body who denies this.

But I am concerned by the trend we are seeing with individuals actively trying to undermine the deal rather than working to ensure it is made stronger and enact it with intended effect. It is similar to the actions—I forget the number, up in the sixties—that my Republican friends have attempted to do something about the Affordable Care Act. It has problems. The question is what are we going to do about it, because the American people need to have health care.

□ 1245

What we would rather do is repeal what exists. Don’t replace it with anything, but make political arguments that it needs to be replaced.

We are doing something very similar here. Rather than making this Iran deal stronger, we are continuing to do what we can to undermine it. The bill we are discussing today is a stark example of this and is an attempt to undermine the deal rather than to strengthen it.

The bill, if enacted, would hamstring us in the future as more than 1,000 Iranian claims before the tribunal have yet to be resolved. Prohibiting any type of future payment to the Iranian Government—and sort of as an aside, it is unfortunate, in this world that we live in, that we have to do business with bad people. I served on the Intelligence Committee when \$2 billion walked off in Iraq, and we still haven’t had accountability about that, but let’s don’t get too far off the track. The fact of the matter is, the bill does all of these things in order to prop up the false premise that the United States paid Iran ransom. This is just plain wrong, and it is a waste of our time.

Mr. Speaker, I am concerned, as I have often been throughout this Congress, that partisan measures such as this one are distracting our attention from measures that we absolutely must pass, including today. There are just 7 legislative days left until we break for another 44-day recess, and that is after the Republicans shut down Congress

for the longest summer recess in modern history. It gives the term “do-nothing Congress” a whole new meaning.

Once we recess next week, unless we do something different, we will leave Washington until after the election. Yet, as of today, despite considerable bipartisan concern, we haven’t gotten a clean Zika research funding bill, and we haven’t gotten a bill on gun violence—not a word on the subject except to threaten Democrats with punishment for protesting this body’s unconscionable inaction on the subject. We haven’t talked about flood relief for Louisiana. We haven’t gotten a bill on the water crisis in Flint, and the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) will address that in a few minutes. We are still dealing with an opioid epidemic. Let me underscore that again. We are dealing with an opioid epidemic in this country that is killing our children all over this Nation, and we have not done anything about it.

The appropriations process has come to a complete standstill. That is why we are out of here tonight. We are going to try to figure out what we are going to do to discharge our responsibilities that are scheduled for October 1; so we will be here next week. All of those out there in Congress who don’t know it, we will be here. We will be fiddling around. We will be doing suspensions. We will be doing one-House measures until the thing comes together, and it will. We will be threatened with “we will keep you here until Saturday, or we will keep you here until Christmas.” It goes on and on, kicking the can down the road.

House Republicans continue to ignore their responsibilities to the American people and waste time on partisan, go-nowhere bills—just like the one we have here today—while Americans are forced to face critical public health emergencies alone. In fact, in each public health crisis before America, House Republicans have chosen to obstruct the meaningful action and resources that are needed to save lives.

On the subject of Zika, this month, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will run out of resources to fight the virus. More than 21,000 Americans have confirmed cases of Zika; yet Republican inaction has forced the CDC to divert research funding away from other diseases. They have had to take money out of the Ebola account, and Ebola has not gone away. They are taking money out of the flu account and out of the tuberculosis account, and those are not going away at any point in time. They are taking cancer research money in order to keep its Zika research program going, which is an immediate crisis. It is not just a Florida thing or a Central America or a South America thing. There are 22,000 Americans who have this virus, and the *Aedes aegypti* mosquito is not the only one that is carrying this virus. This has been researched since 2009. It didn’t just start yesterday, and it is not going to end tomorrow, but some-

thing needs to be done today about this particular crisis.

I quote CDC Director Tom Frieden. The Republican co-chair of the Florida delegation and I had a hearing of our Florida delegation, and Mr. Frieden came to testify before us. He said: “We are out of money, and we need Congress to act.”

I am not sure how much more plainly it can be said. We need a clean bill that provides adequate funding. Let’s stop playing games with the lives of women and infants and of the people in general who have contracted this virus. It has now shown that it can affect the mental stability of adults.

Mr. Speaker, we have some serious issues to tackle; so I am dismayed to be on the floor today focusing on yet another messaging bill. There will be headlines tomorrow. Members will go back home to their districts and will talk about “we stopped Obama and any future President from paying ransom money.” It was not ransom in the first place—it was Iran’s money. The prisoners who were released would have been released. Had we done it a month earlier, I wonder if they would have called it a ransom. Had we done it a month later, I wonder if they would have called it a ransom. Yet this messaging bill comes here.

I hope that my colleagues across the aisle, in the final week before we leave Washington, will let us address just some of the things that I mentioned.

Mr. Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield 2 minutes to the gentleman from Texas (Mr. WILLIAMS).

Mr. WILLIAMS. Mr. Speaker, 2 weeks ago, the Obama administration admitted to transferring \$1.3 billion in cash to Iran after delivering a \$400 million cash payment on the same day that Iran released American prisoners. The Obama administration tried to walk back its actions by calling the first cash payment leverage, but the American people, frankly, know better. The cash payment to Iran was a ransom payment—I repeat, a ransom payment to Iran—plain and simple.

Let’s get one thing straight here: Iran is our enemy. It is not our friend. Iran is the enemy of our most important allies in the region and not their friend. Iran’s leadership has publicly promised to wipe out America and to wipe out Israel—right off the map. Those are not the words of a friend. Iran imprisons American citizens and taunts our Navy every single day. That is not a friend. Iran is one of only three nations our Department of State classifies as a “state sponsor of terrorism.”

Whether it is the Obama administration’s refusal to utter the phrase “radical Islam” or the word “ransom,” it has tried time and again to deceive the American people with its policies that have ultimately made America less safe. As the increasingly popular saying goes: our friends no longer trust us, and our enemies no longer fear us.

It is time for Congress to step in and block future cash payments to Iran. As an original cosponsor of this bill, I urge my colleagues to support the Prohibiting Future Payments to Iran Act.

In God we trust.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

If this had been ransom, there is a person whom Iran has held prisoner and about whom Iran has denied a lack of information to the family—Robert Levinson, who has been in Iran for 9 years. I just can’t imagine that a ransom agreement or the meeting of a demand would not have included information about Robert Levinson. That would be, in my considered opinion, the height of ridiculousness; therefore, the obviousness of leaving Mr. Levinson out of what would be a proposed ransom strikes me as being strange.

Mr. Speaker, if we defeat the previous question, I am going to offer an amendment to the rule to bring up comprehensive legislation that provides the resources that are needed to help the families of Flint, Michigan, recover from the lead drinking water crisis.

Mr. Speaker, the children and families of Flint are facing lifelong damage as a result of lead exposure. It is long past time that this Congress acted. We have an opportunity right now to bring up legislation that would ensure the people of Flint will receive clean drinking water and to provide health and educational support for the children who are affected by the crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent to insert the text of the amendment in the RECORD, along with extraneous material, immediately prior to the vote on the previous question.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Florida?

There was no objection.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, a champion, among the champions of people who are here in Congress, is DAN KILDEE. I had the privilege of serving with his uncle for a substantial portion of my career. I had the privilege—and I have spoken with Dan about this—to visit with his uncle before this particular crisis of Flint’s and to discuss the plight of the people in Flint and Pontiac and that general area.

In this particular instance, I hope we don’t hear from people that this isn’t germane. This is the Democrats’ motion to recommit, and Republicans who care about the lead exposure that these children and families have been exposed to in Flint can simply vote for the motion to recommit, and we will be able to address this subject.

I yield 5 minutes to the distinguished gentleman from Flint, Michigan (Mr. KILDEE) to discuss our proposal.

Mr. KILDEE. I thank the gentleman from Florida (Mr. HASTINGS) for yielding and for all of his advocacy on behalf of the people of my community and, also, of the many forgotten people across the country.

Mr. Speaker, I rise in opposition to the previous question in order to bring up a vote to finally help the people of my hometown of Flint, Michigan.

In 2 days, it will have been 1 year since Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha released the results of her research that showed that blood levels of the children in Flint showed significantly elevated levels of lead—that the water that they had been drinking had poisoned them.

A year later, here we stand. This Congress has not yet acted to provide any relief to a community that is facing the greatest crisis—the greatest disaster—of its history. It has been a year since it was known that that water was too dangerous to drink. Members in this body have heard me speak about this before. It has been 2 years since, actually, the water contained lead. It took that long for the information, finally, to come to light; yet Congress has continuously failed to act.

We have a way to get this done. I just ask my Republican colleagues in the House to step out of the way and allow the bipartisan legislation that has passed the Senate to have a vote so that it may be included in the legislation that this body is considering. The House can do so by following the Senate's lead, which passed legislation to provide relief to Flint by a vote of 95-3. Let me just make this clear: the United States Senate voted 95-3 to provide support for the people of Flint—and yet nothing here in this House.

□ 1300

We have an opportunity with the continuing resolution to include that language in the continuing resolution and help the people of my hometown, again, people who yet today cannot drink their water without fear that it will poison them.

This is a fully paid-for provision. There was always debate about whether we should be able to spend in case of emergency without having an offset. In this case, we have an offset. So the argument has to be that the people of Flint simply don't deserve to have their Federal Government act in their moment of greatest need. I know from conversations that I have had with Members on both sides of the aisle that that cannot be the case.

I have had all sorts of expressions of sympathy. Many Members of Congress have traveled to Flint, Democrats and Republicans, and have expressed to me on an almost daily basis that they wish there was something they could do to help those poor folks. Well, you know what? Sympathy expresses sentiment, but it doesn't provide clean drinking water for the people of my hometown. We have a chance to act.

Now, when this came before this body, this Congress, in the form of hearings in the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform and the Committee on Energy and Commerce, many of my Republican colleagues—virtually every member of the Over-

sight and Government Reform Committee—spoke up and said what a shame it was that the Federal Government played a role in the crisis that Flint is facing, that the Federal Government bore some responsibility.

Now, we can argue about how much responsibility lands at the State. I think the majority of the responsibility is the State's, but I would agree that this is failure at every level of government. My Republican colleagues went so far as to call for a Cabinet member of the President to resign because the Federal responsibility was so great that a member of the President's Cabinet should step down because it was the Federal Government who bore responsibility, in part.

Suddenly, when it is time to actually do something to help the people of Flint, what do we have? All of a sudden, the narrative changes. All of a sudden, what was a Federal problem with clear Federal accountability and responsibility, universally demonstrated by my friends on the other side of the aisle, when it comes time to take up a paid-for piece of legislation that will not increase the deficit but will help these poor folks who cannot drink their water, what do we get? Shuffling of their feet. Stunned silence. Nothing. Nothing. Shame. Shame.

What would you do if it was your hometown? What would you do if it was your community?

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The time of the gentleman has expired.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield an additional 1 minute to the gentleman from Michigan.

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, you know what you would do. You would step to the floor of this House and you would make sure every single day you fought to get help for your community.

One of the first votes I cast when I came here was to help the victims of a storm that was nowhere near my home, and I was proud to do it because they were Americans who happened to be in need.

What is it about Flint? What is it about the people of Flint? Answer me. What is it that separates them, that has them in a position where their Federal Government can't come to their aid? When they can't drink the water, when the water that comes from their tap is poison and we have a chance to do something about it without increasing the Federal deficit with an offset that is already identified, I hear nothing. I hear nothing from the leadership of this House that gives any indication that the people of Flint matter at all. Shame. Shame.

We ought to act, and we ought to do it now—not maybe 3 months from now, not, “Oh, Flint, maybe we will get you in the next bill or maybe the next piece of legislation.” Shame. We should bring it up now.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

We are here today to talk about a bill that would address yet another foreign policy and national security failure by the Obama administration. The other issues that have been brought up are important issues, but that is not what we are talking about today in this rule.

The gentleman from Michigan knows probably far better than I do that there are a number of people around here working on the Flint issue. We could have a bill on the floor of this House as early as next week. That is certainly my hope and the hope of a lot of other people. I am not privy to all of what is going on there, but I understand that may be coming. That is not what we are here about today.

It is not unusual for me to stand up here when I am managing one of these rules and hear our friends on the other side want to bring up everything other than the topic of what is in the rule because they don't want to talk about the foreign policy and national security failures of the Obama administration. Well, the American people want us to do something about that. They are worried when they see somebody put bombs in trash cans in New York, when somebody stabs people to death in Minnesota. They want to see us doing something. We are trying to do something about that with numerous pieces of legislation that we bring forward in this House; and whenever we bring them up, we hear from the other side about everything else.

Well, today we are here to talk about stopping this President and future Presidents from sending pallets of cash to Iran. That is what we are talking about. So I want us to get back to that debate because that is an important debate for the American people.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

Earlier, I misspoke when I said that we could vote for the motion to recommit. I should have said—and I correct the RECORD now—the previous question was what I was speaking of. The simple fact of the matter is we can vote in support of the previous question, and then we would be able to address the Flint crisis.

Mr. Speaker, I want to reiterate that this bill is nothing more than an attempt by the majority to make political hay of the recent payment to the Government of Iran, a payment that was a legal settlement. It seems to get ignored by my friends that the United States and Iran are participants in a claims tribunal that was established 35 years ago under the Algiers Accords because Iran had held our hostages, and we needed a methodology to be able to pay and have those hostages remunerated appropriately. That said, \$2.5 billion has been paid to American claims rightly. This framework is being followed, and what this legislation that is going nowhere would do, if it went somewhere, would be to fly in the face of that framework that was established.

By prohibiting any future payments to Iran, this bill could put us in the position of violating the Algiers Accords and owing even more money. It comes at the expense of addressing issues that really matter, like Flint, like Zika, like the opioid epidemic, like gun violence, like the Louisiana floods and the crumbling infrastructure of this Nation. The list goes on and on.

I urge my colleagues to oppose this rule and the underlying measure.

I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself the balance of my time to close.

The gentleman said earlier in his remarks that there are times when the United States has to have interactions with bad people. As a member of the Armed Services Committee, I understand that. We do. But we should be wise in doing so. He and I completely agreed about the ill wisdom of the deal that President Obama struck with Iran; nonetheless, he struck the deal.

He said that there are 200 Iranian claims pending. I have no idea if any of those claims are meritorious. But if even one of them is meritorious, I don't think he would agree—and I know I don't agree, and the vast majority of people in America don't agree—that you pay such a claim by sending pallets of cash. Why would they do that? Why would any President of the United States send pallets of cash to the leading state sponsor of terrorism? It is to hide what they were doing, and they have been found out. We should never do that with anyone, but particularly not with an enemy.

The other thing that this bill provides, besides a prohibition on that—and that is so common sense that I don't know how we could disagree about it—is it requires congressional notification. Don't we want the Congress, as a coequal branch of government, to know before we pay money to the leading state sponsor of terrorism? Don't we want to let the American people know what is going on?

This is a very commonsense bill. The people of the United States expect us to do nothing less than this. So while I appreciate some of the other things we heard about it, some of the other issues they mentioned, let's focus on this. Let's at least get this done so that this President and no President can ever, ever again pay ransom to Iran.

Mr. Speaker, I again urge my colleagues to support House Resolution 879 and the underlying legislation.

The material previously referred to by Mr. HASTINGS is as follows:

AN AMENDMENT TO H. RES. 879 OFFERED BY
MR. HASTINGS

At the end of the resolution, add the following new sections:

SEC. 3. Immediately upon adoption of this resolution the Speaker shall, pursuant to clause 2(b) of rule XVIII, declare the House resolved into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for consideration of the bill (H.R. 4479) to provide emergency assistance related to the Flint water crisis, and for other purposes. The first reading of the bill shall be dispensed with. All

points of order against consideration of the bill are waived. General debate shall be confined to the bill and shall not exceed one hour equally divided and controlled by the chair and ranking minority member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce. After general debate the bill shall be considered for amendment under the five-minute rule. All points of order against provisions in the bill are waived. At the conclusion of consideration of the bill for amendment the Committee shall rise and report the bill to the House with such amendments as may have been adopted. The previous question shall be considered as ordered on the bill and amendments thereto to final passage without intervening motion except one motion to recommend with or without instructions. If the Committee of the Whole rises and reports that it has come to no resolution on the bill, then on the next legislative day the House shall, immediately after the third daily order of business under clause 1 of rule XIV, resolve into the Committee of the Whole for further consideration of the bill.

SEC. 4. Clause 1(c) of rule XIX shall not apply to the consideration of H.R. 4479.

THE VOTE ON THE PREVIOUS QUESTION: WHAT
IT REALLY MEANS

This vote, the vote on whether to order the previous question on a special rule, is not merely a procedural vote. A vote against ordering the previous question is a vote against the Republican majority agenda and a vote to allow the Democratic minority to offer an alternative plan. It is a vote about what the House should be debating.

Mr. Clarence Cannon's *Precedents of the House of Representatives* (VI, 308-311), describes the vote on the previous question on the rule as "a motion to direct or control the consideration of the subject before the House being made by the Member in charge." To defeat the previous question is to give the opposition a chance to decide the subject before the House. Cannon cites the Speaker's ruling of January 13, 1920, to the effect that "the refusal of the House to sustain the demand for the previous question passes the control of the resolution to the opposition" in order to offer an amendment. On March 15, 1909, a member of the majority party offered a rule resolution. The House defeated the previous question and a member of the opposition rose to a parliamentary inquiry, asking who was entitled to recognition. Speaker Joseph G. Cannon (R-Illinois) said: "The previous question having been refused, the gentleman from New York, Mr. Fitzgerald, who had asked the gentleman to yield to him for an amendment, is entitled to the first recognition."

The Republican majority may say "the vote on the previous question is simply a vote on whether to proceed to an immediate vote on adopting the resolution . . . [and] has no substantive legislative or policy implications whatsoever." But that is not what they have always said. Listen to the Republican Leadership Manual on the Legislative Process in the United States House of Representatives, (6th edition, page 135). Here's how the Republicans describe the previous question vote in their own manual: "Although it is generally not possible to amend the rule because the majority Member controlling the time will not yield for the purpose of offering an amendment, the same result may be achieved by voting down the previous question on the rule. . . . When the motion for the previous question is defeated, control of the time passes to the Member who led the opposition to ordering the previous question. That Member, because he then controls the time, may offer an amendment to the rule, or yield for the purpose of amendment."

In Deschler's *Procedure in the U.S. House of Representatives*, the subchapter titled "Amending Special Rules" states: "a refusal to order the previous question on such a rule [a special rule reported from the Committee on Rules] opens the resolution to amendment and further debate." (Chapter 21, section 21.2) Section 21.3 continues: "Upon rejection of the motion for the previous question on a resolution reported from the Committee on Rules, control shifts to the Member leading the opposition to the previous question, who may offer a proper amendment or motion and who controls the time for debate thereon."

Clearly, the vote on the previous question on a rule does have substantive policy implications. It is one of the only available tools for those who oppose the Republican majority's agenda and allows those with alternative views the opportunity to offer an alternative plan.

Mr. BYRNE. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time, and I move the previous question on the resolution.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on ordering the previous question.

The question was taken; and the Speaker pro tempore announced that the ayes appeared to have it.

Mr. HASTINGS. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX, further proceedings on this question will be postponed.

EMPOWERING EMPLOYEES THROUGH STOCK OWNERSHIP ACT

Mr. BRADY of Texas. Mr. Speaker, pursuant to House Resolution 875, I call up the bill (H.R. 5719) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to modify the tax treatment of certain equity grants, and ask for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 875, the amendment in the nature of a substitute recommended by the Committee on Ways and Means, printed in the bill, is adopted, and the bill, as amended, is considered read.

The text of the bill, as amended, is as follows:

H.R. 5719

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Empowering Employees through Stock Ownership Act".

SEC. 2. TREATMENT OF QUALIFIED EQUITY GRANTS.

(a) IN GENERAL.—

(1) ELECTION TO DEFER INCOME.—Section 83 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 is amended by adding at the end the following new subsection:

“(i) QUALIFIED EQUITY GRANTS.—

“(1) IN GENERAL.—For purposes of this subtitle, if qualified stock is transferred to a qualified employee who makes an election with respect to such stock under this subsection—

“(A) except as provided in subparagraph (B), no amount shall be included in income under subsection (a) for the first taxable year in which